



## Only Obama and Big Green oppose Keystone pipeline

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It's not often that Big Labor's James P. Hoffa and U.S. Chamber of Commerce President Thomas Donohue agree on something, but once in a while an issue comes along that unites these two gentlemen. Such an issue is the Keystone XL pipeline that would link refineries on the U.S. Gulf Coast and Canada's oil-rich tar sands. All that stands between the start of work and the creation of thousands of good-paying jobs in America is a green light from President Obama. But Obama fears angering thousands of campaign contributors and workers associated with the Big Green environmental movement, which rabidly opposes Keystone. So he's waffled and delayed a decision until after the November 2012 election.



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But pressure across the political spectrum is steadily growing to persuade Obama to put the needs of thousands of Americans seeking jobs ahead of his own political concerns. In a speech last week, Donohue pointed to the unanimity of unions and the business community in wanting "President Obama to act in the best interests of our national security and our workers and approve the pipeline. We can put 20,000 Americans to work right away and up to 250,000 over the life of the project." And in a joint statement issued by U.S. pipeline contractors and unions, Hoffa said "the Keystone Pipeline project will offer working men and women a real chance to earn a good wage and support their families in this difficult economic climate."

Hoffa is not alone among labor leaders. The list of those urging Obama to approve the pipeline reads like a who's who of Big Labor. The AFL-CIO's Mark Ayers told Huffington Post that "it is America's workers who are clamoring for the expedited approval of this important project. As President Obama has rightfully declared when it comes to the creation of jobs, we can't wait." Ayers is president of the AFL-CIO's building and construction trades department. Similarly, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers said in its recent endorsement of the pipeline: "At a time when jobs are the top global priority, the Keystone project will put thousands back to work and have ripple benefits throughout the North American economy. Our members look forward to being part of this historic project and pledge to deliver the highest quality work to make it a success."

With unemployment at 8.7 percent and as many as 14 million Americans either drawing unemployment benefits and looking for work or having exhausted their benefits and given up

applying for new jobs, approving Keystone ought to be a no-brainer, immune from political calculations. Support for the project is bipartisan in both the Senate and House, so there is no question that Obama would be cheered on Capitol Hill for making the right decision. So who is more important to you, Mr. President, the working men and women of America, or the high-paid, pin-striped liberal activists running groups like the Sierra Club and Natural Resources Defense Council?

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